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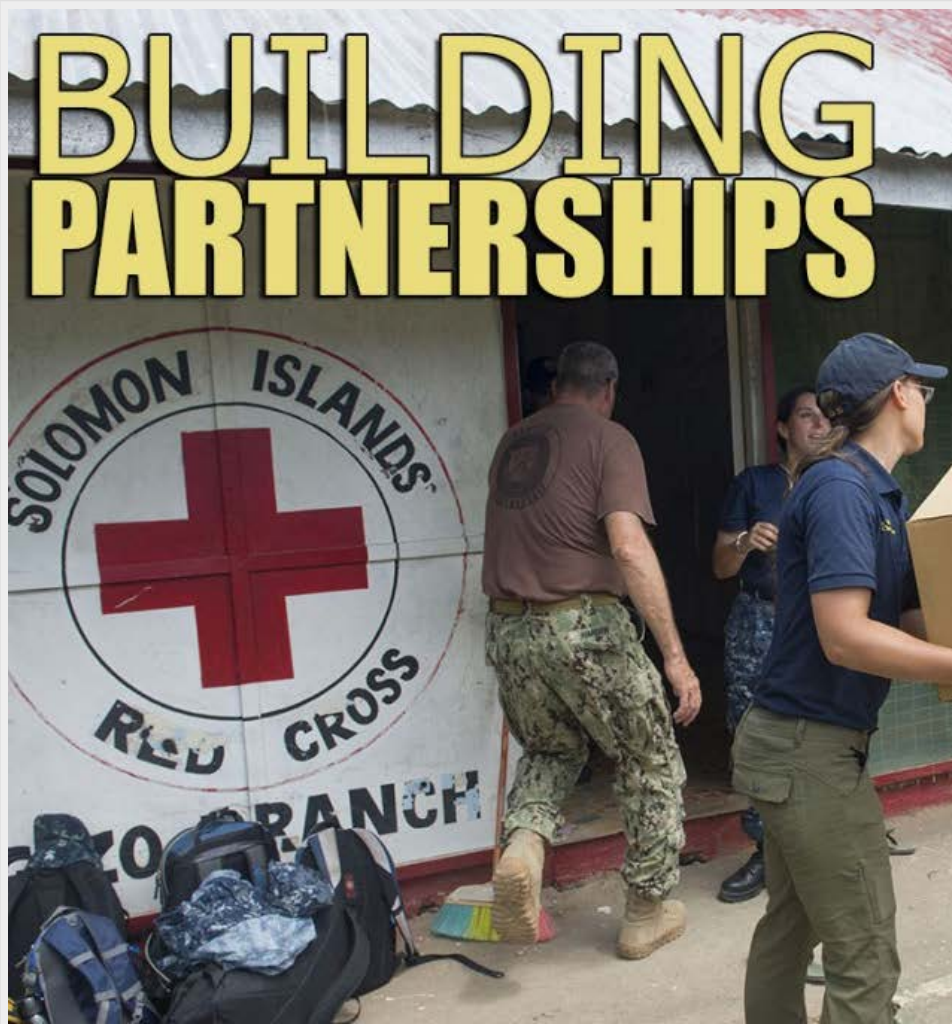
Written on AUGUST 15, 2013 AT 7:00 AM by VKREMER

Building Partnerships During Pacific Partnership 2013

Filed under HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE AND DISASTER RELIEF, U.S. NAVY

(NO COMMENTS)

By **Cmdr. Carolyn Currie**, director, theater engagement, [U.S. Navy Bureau of Medicine and Surgery](#)



Pacific Partnership 2013 personnel help deliver boxes of donated medical supplies to the Gizo Branch 2013. Working at the invitation of each host nation, U.S. Navy forces are joined by non-governmental organizations from Australia, Canada, Colombia, France, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, South Korea and New Zealand to build and strengthen disaster-response preparedness. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication)

Navy Medicine Video

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Another Saturday night at sea. We left Kiribati yesterday afternoon and are enroute to our next stop.

We departed the island hot, dusty and tired, but tremendously satisfied that we achieved our objectives and left the place better than we found it. There were cheers and waves at the pier as the last landing craft utility bound for the USS Pearl Harbor pulled away.

The ship is once again bursting at the seams, as we embarked over 100 of our Kiwi counterparts onto the ship yesterday. Their presence has reminded us how far we've come on our journey. As they wander the ship looking very lost and very wobbly on their new found sea legs, we chuckle to ourselves that it was only nine weeks ago that we had the same bewildered looks on our faces as we bounced off the bulkheads with every rock and roll of the ship at sea. An overhead announcement this morning that the water was being turned off due to an unbalanced consumption to production ratio, also brought back memories of our earlier days of a full ship!



Solomon Island citizens and children tour a landing craft medium (LCM) assigned to the Royal New Zealand ship HMNZS Canterbury (LSL-421) after landing ashore to drop off personnel and supplies during Pacific Partnership 2013. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Carlos M. Vazquez II/Released)

The New Zealand Defense Forces took over the lead for the mission in Kiribati and will continue to do so in the Solomon Islands (or Solies as they call them). Integrating our forces has been a challenge, but not without great reward. We have learned to pool our talents to plan engagements, work side by side to solve problems and are making new friends along the way. We still have Aussie, Canadian, Malaysian and Korean partners aboard as well. We no longer notice the different uniforms, the accents are now commonplace and everyone joins in when the deck of cards breaks out in the office or we have a spontaneous movie night in the wardroom.

My mood has changed to melancholy as we get ready to say goodbye to many of our embarked crew. A number of Americans will leave the USS Pearl Harbor along with the embarked Kiwis and crossdeck to the NZ ship Canterbury. The Solomon Islands will be our last mission stop before we head back to Hawaii. It's hard to believe the deployment is almost over. What an amazing experience it's been!

The next few days will be filled with planning meetings, briefs and manifests as we plan for our engagements in the Solomon Islands. As with our previous mission stops we will be putting on health fairs, nursing symposiums, working side-by-side with host nation counterparts in clinics and hospitals and collaborating with host nation officials to support their health system strengthening initiatives. The most rewarding moments will come on the ground when we make new friends, break bread together, share stories and celebrate our similarities as well as our diversity!

I hope all is well at home. Although I am sad to see the end of this adventure coming fast, I am anxious to get back to my normal routine. I miss my friends and family!

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